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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2380
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3145
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1432
RUEHVN/USMISSION USOSCE 3480
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2866
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000684

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/CEN

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TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM KG

SUBJECT: Kyrgyz Election: Presidential Campaigns Continue

Ref: A. Bishkek 668

IB. Bishkek 662

IC. Bishkek 651

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I1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Central Election Commission announced pairings for the official debates on national radio and television. The format for the debates will feature two of the six candidates appearing together on three consecutive days -- July 8-10 for the radio debates, and July 13-15 for the television debates. In other campaign news, President Bakiyev won the support of former Prime Minister Kulov and an MP from the opposition Social Democrat Party.
END SUMMARY.

CEC Announces Presidential Debate Slots

I2. (U) On June 19, the Central Election Commission (CEC) announced the results of random drawings to assign candidate pairings and time slots for television and radio debates. For the debates on Kyrgyz Radio, Jenishbek Nazaraliyev will debate Toktoayim Umetaliyeva on July 8, President Bakiyev will debate Nurlan Motuyev on July 9, and Almazbek Atambayev will debate Temir Sariyev on July 10. For the debates on state television, Motuyev will debate Nazaraliyev on July 13, President Bakiyev will debate Umetaliyeva on July 14, and Atambayev will again debate Sariyev on July 15. The television debates will be broadcast live, and then re-broadcast a second time.

Candidates will also be given blocks of time to broadcast their speeches, but the distribution of time slots has not yet been publicly announced.

Pairing Sparks Protest

I3. (SBU) After the pairings were announced, Dr. Nazaraliyev complained about being paired with Motuyev. "I have no questions for Mr. Motuyev. I do not know what we can debate about," the press quoted Nazaraliyev as saying as he announced he would not participate in the television debate.

Bakiyev Picks Up Supporters

¶4. (SBU) On June 19, former Prime Minister Felix Kulov announced that his party, Ar Namys, had almost unanimously voted to support President Bakiyev's candidacy in the presidential election. Kulov had moved to the opposition after serving as Bakiyev's Prime Minister in 2005-2006, but since early 2008 Kulov has served in the Kyrgyz Government as the Director of Small and Medium Size Energy Enterprises. Kulov also stated that he hoped his Ar Namys party would win seats in the next parliamentary elections, which added to the current speculation that following re-election in July, Bakiyev will dissolve the parliament and call early elections.

¶5. (SBU) On June 22, Social Democrat MP Jusupjan Jeyenbekov announced that he would resign his seat and withdraw his Meken Birimdigi party from the Social Democrat Party of Kyrgyzstan (SDPK). SDPK MP Bakyt Beshimov announced the same day that Jeyenbekov had reconsidered, but in a meeting with the Parliamentary Speaker on June 23, Jeyenbekov confirmed his resignation, and also announced that he supported Bakiyev's presidential candidacy. As the reason for his resignation, he said that he could not be involved in politics when he needed to help in the search for his son, who disappeared last fall. A contact in the SDPK party refused to speculate about other reasons Jeyenbekov may have had for leaving the party.

The Campaign Trail

¶6. (SBU) Following the campaign kickoffs on June 18 (Ref B), little has happened on the campaign trail to attract the attention of the national press. After beginning the campaign in Talas Oblast,

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President Bakiyev went to Osh, and next plans to visit Chui Oblast in the north. Temir Sariyev has campaigned in Jalalabad, Batken, and Osh Oblasts, and plans to head to Issyk-kul Oblast next. Atambayev is currently campaigning in Osh Oblast, and next will go to Batken Oblast. While in Osh, Atambayev garnered some press coverage for his claim that the United People's Movement would put 100,000 people -- about two percent of the Kyrgyz population -- into polling places as observers on election day. The remaining three candidates appear to have contained their campaigning to Bishkek to date.

LITZENBERGER